



**U.S. Immigration  
and Customs  
Enforcement**

June 1, 2005

# News Release

## **26 UNAUTHORIZED WORKERS ARRESTED AT NORTHROP GRUMMAN FACILITY**

*Nation's ship building industry a key resource to protect*

PASCAGOULA, MS.--U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) special agents and Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS) agents today conducted an operation targeting foreign nationals working illegally at the Northrop Grumman Shipyard in Pascagoula, Mississippi.

Agents used a civil search warrant as the authority to search the facility for suspected undocumented workers identified through examination of records maintained by the Northrop Grumman security office. Michael A. Holt, Special Agent in Charge for U. S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in New Orleans, and Dunn Lampton, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Mississippi, made the announcement

This investigation is part of an ongoing post-9/11 worksite initiative that focuses on businesses with security sensitive sites and critical infrastructure facilities such as airports, defense installations and bio-agriculture industries.

The 26 illegal workers were identified as having had access to or have attempted to access the Northrop Grumman Shipyard. These individuals were apprehended and will be presented for prosecution as appropriate in the Southern District of Mississippi for using fraudulent documents to gain employment, falsely claiming to be U.S. citizens, or illegal re-entry to the United States after deportation. ICE investigative efforts have resulted in these illegal workers no longer having access to the Northrop Grumman Shipyard facility. Under federal law, employers who knowingly hire or refer unauthorized workers can face substantial fines, and in certain aggravated cases, criminal prosecution. No evidence has been found implicating either the subcontractors or Northrop Grumman in any criminal or administrative violations.

An important goal of this investigation is to enhance private/public partnerships to protect U.S. businesses against possible security breaches.

"Protecting the integrity of the ship building industry in Mississippi is a crucial part of ICE's interior enforcement strategy," said Michael A. Holt special agent-in-charge for ICE investigations in New Orleans. "When an individual uses fraudulent or false documents to get a job, they hide their identity and possible criminal history. We need to know the identities of the people are that are working on our critical infrastructure programs.

United States Attorney Dunn Lampton, echoing SAC Holt's comments, stated, "On behalf of the U.S. Attorney's Office, I offer my sincerest thanks to the fine special agents from ICE and NCIS for their thoroughness, professionalism, and resolve. Because national security is our absolute top priority, it is imperative that we operate seamlessly and in partnerships precisely as this one to use all of the resources at our disposal to make absolutely sure that the industries that provide for our defense and commerce are not vulnerable to, or threatened by individuals, who operate under fraudulent identities."

In accordance with ICE's homeland security mission, ICE agents prioritize worksite enforcement efforts by focusing on investigations related to critical infrastructure, national security and employers who engage in egregious criminal violations.

Over the past few years, ICE agents have conducted several nationwide operations designed to remove illegal aliens found working at some of the nation's most sensitive worksites, including airports, nuclear power plants, chemical plants and defense facilities.

At U.S. commercial airports alone, ICE has identified more than 5,800 unauthorized airport workers, arrested more than 1,100 unauthorized alien workers, and obtained 775 criminal indictments.

To aid employers with the screening process, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services operates the Basic Pilot Program, a Web-based system that businesses can use to verify the employment eligibility of newly hired workers. Nationwide there are more than 15,000 employer sites linked into the Basic Pilot Program. Interested employers are urged to call the agency's toll-free number [888-464-4218] to obtain more information about the program.

# ICE #

*U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.*